

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of June 10, 2013**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Chris Bradley, Brad Denny, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Rob Lewis, Acting Clerk Ken McCann, Peter G. DeMasi (Highway Superintendent/Fire Chief), James Dziobek (Acting Police Chief), Will Roberts (OUR House), MaryJoanne Watson, Stanley Osborne, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- a. Will Roberts, Executive Director, One Unified Response (OUR) House of Central Vermont.** Mr. Roberts explained that OUR House is a non-profit child advocacy center that works with law enforcement in helping prosecute child abuse cases. OUR House also is a special investigation unit with a state trooper in residence that provides forensic interviewing as well as therapy services. The state trooper currently works with the Vermont State Police in investigating suspected cases of physical and/or sexual abuse of children in those Washington County towns without their own police departments. Mr. Roberts then informed the Board that he has applied for \$60,000 in state grant money that would allow OUR House to hire a second state trooper and thereby expand their services. This would allow OUR House to assist all Washington County communities, thus freeing up local police departments from long hours on interviews, investigations, etc. He added that often initial allegations of abuse expand as the case is developed. OUR House handles about 125 cases each year; there were six (6) cases from Northfield in the past twelve (12) months. Mr. Roberts noted that since the \$60,000 amount would not cover all the expenses of an additional full-time officer, he is contacting Washington County communities to see if they would be willing to provide funds, equipment, etc., that would cover the approximate \$10,000 shortfall. For example, Montpelier has provided an automobile; Barre City will provide administrative assistance and a trained (but non-salaried) officer; and both Berlin and Waterbury have pledged as yet undetermined amounts of money. Mr. Roberts would prefer that any contribution that Northfield is willing to make not come directly out of its police department budget as this would defeat the purpose of providing supplemental services. He felt that an annual contribution of between \$3000 and \$4000 from Northfield would be appropriate. Selectman Gadbois asked if this would be an annual grant. Mr. Roberts confirmed that OUR House would have to reapply each year. However, he felt that should he be able to establish a coalition of local support, future funding would be somewhat secure. If the initial grant application is unsuccessful, Mr. Roberts would apply again next year. Manager Lewis stated that this request for funds would have to be made at next year's Town Meeting (03/04/14) as Northfield voters, not the Select Board, would have to authorize this expenditure. Selectman Denny wanted it clarified whether or not OUR House currently provides direct services to Northfield. Mr. Roberts confirmed that it did not. However, he added that OUR House does make its facility available to the Northfield Police Department (NPD) for interviews, therapy sessions, etc. Should the second officer be hired, NPD could choose to refer certain cases directly to OUR House. Mr. Roberts noted that this is just the beginning of his conversations with Northfield on this matter. Selectman Denny would like a written proposal from OUR House that would specify the services that would be provided to Washington County communities should they decide to provide financial support. Selectman Bradley also would like to see how the aforementioned \$10,000 would be split amongst the solicited communities. Selectman Goslant asked if other Vermont counties had similar facilities to handle suspected child abuse cases. Mr. Roberts stated that all counties have access to a coordinated facility as this is a state mandate. However, there are variations in how they are organized, etc. Police Chief James Dziobek added that the special investigative unit in Chittenden County has become the model, not only for Vermont but for the whole nation. He noted that having a collaborative unit in each county is the best way to deal with these types of cases. Manager Lewis asked how much police time might be freed up if OUR House handled the preliminary investigative phase of suspected cases in Northfield. Chief Dziobek thought that about fifty (50) hours would be a good estimate. He added that with the general public becoming more aware of how serious and widespread child abuse is in this country, he expects that the federal government will provide more funding to address this. Selectman Denny is concerned that it would not be fair that Washington County communities that currently support their own police departments are being asked to provide this financial assistance when those reliant upon the state police are not being asked to contribute. Chair Quinn suggested that Mr. Roberts could return to the Board in a month or two with the information that has been requested tonight. He then thanked Mr. Roberts for the valuable information.

V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

- a. **Highway Superintendent Peter G. DeMasi.** Mr. DeMasi provided the Board beforehand with a written report that he now touched upon. His report included a list of all the roads that had been graded in May 2013 as well as the day(s) they had been graded. He added that the final grading for this summer had begun. In addition, roadside mowing has begun even though the weather has not been cooperating. Chair Quinn asked how well Forest Road held up during the recent rainstorms. Mr. DeMasi stated that it did very well even though he could not fully explain why. He then added that Northfield did receive the state grant to install a box culvert on Smith Hill Road. However, we will not be able to go out to bid on this until all the state paperwork has been completed. In addition, the new ten-wheel Western Star truck has been ordered and should be in service by mid-July. Mr. DeMasi also provided an updated list of the one- and two-house roads in Northfield. Selectman Bradley asked how many hours were put on the excavator this past month. Mr. DeMasi thought it was about one hundred (100). Selectman Gadbois then asked about the total amount of hours on the machine. Mr. DeMasi said it was approximately four hundred (400). Chair Quinn thanked Mr. DeMasi for his report.
- b. **Fire Chief Superintendent Peter G. DeMasi.** Mr. DeMasi announced that he will be retiring as Fire Chief as of July 15, 2013. His son and current Assistant Fire Chief, Peter J. DeMasi, will be his successor. Mr. DeMasi added that he has enjoyed his thirty (30) years on the department starting as Firefighter before moving up as Fire Captain, Assistant Fire Chief, and then Fire Chief. He believes that his replacement will do an outstanding job for Northfield for a good number of years. Mr. DeMasi concluded by noting that the annual Safety Day held last Saturday (06/08/13) had one of the largest crowds in recent years. There were many emergency service volunteers on hand, which helped contribute to a very successful event. The Selectmen then thanked Mr. DeMasi for his presentation tonight and for his past service.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **May 28, 2013 (Joint Board Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve the minutes. There were two (2) changes: the discussion of the Cemetery Maintenance Contract makes a reference to a 3% increase that should have been 2% and Selectman Bradley wanted it emphasized that when he asked questions regarding the tree trimming near the Catholic church, he was trying to get confirmation that the work was done for electric line safety reasons. **Motion to approve revised minutes passed 5-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #24-13.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve Warrant #24-13 in the amount of \$57,282.04. Selectman Goslant was concerned about what appeared to be recurrent expenses for NPD holsters, belts, and badges. Manager Lewis stated that there were potential new part-time officers that had to be equipped. Selectman Goslant also noted \$1000 in paramedic intercept payments this past month. Manager Lewis agreed that this amount was higher than usual but it will be recouped as part of ambulance billing. Chair Quinn thought that the electric bills for the various municipal facilities, including the relatively new Police Station, seemed rather high. He would like the Board to look at what can be done to make these facilities more energy efficient. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #24-13A.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve Warrant #24-13A in the amount of \$68,902.78. Manager Lewis stated that these payments were for refinancing old notes at lower interest rates. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through May 26, 2013.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$52,103.07. Selectman Goslant asked about various NPD special detail expenses. Manager Lewis said these expenses are billed and reimbursed by the party requesting stand-by coverage. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Capital Equipment Refunding Note (Town Garage Vehicle Lift): \$42,041 at 1.6% interest.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to approve and sign the Capital Equipment Refunding Note and the Capital Equipment Refunding Borrowing Resolution in the amount of \$42,041 at 1.6% interest for the vehicle lift at the Town Garage. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Current Expense Note (Central Street Culvert): \$25,860 at 1.6% interest.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve and sign the Current Expense Note; the Current Expense Borrowing Resolution; and the Non-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate in the amount of \$25,860 at 1.6% interest for the Central Street Culvert Replacement Project. Manager Lewis noted that although the Town took out the note for this project, the Village will pay the full debt amount. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- c. **Bond Anticipation Note (RSMS Program): \$90,000 at 1.6% interest.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note; the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and the Non-Arbitrage Certificate in the amount of \$90,000 at 1.6% interest for the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) Program. Manager Lewis stated that this note was authorized at the 2011 Town Meeting; an additional note will be taken out for the borrowing authorized at this year's Town Meeting. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Approval of Class 2 and 3 Road Standards Resolution (revised).** Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve and sign the new Class 2 and 3 Road Standards Resolution with the revisions recommended by Highway Superintendent DeMasi. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. **Approval of 2013 Memorial Park Pool Schedule and Fees.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the 2013 Memorial Park Pool Schedule and Fees as recommended by Manager Lewis. Manager Lewis noted that our pool fees have not been raised since 2007 and he worked with Pool Director Shannon Palone to develop fees more in line with those charged at other Central Vermont municipal pools. Selectman Denny asked if there is a procedure for waiving fees for those who cannot afford them. Manager Goslant stated that Ms. Palone does have this authority on a case-by-case basis. Selectman Goslant thought that this was an excellent effort to make the Municipal Pool more self-supporting. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- f. **Appointment of Tax Sale Bidder.** Manager Lewis noted that the sale of tax-delinquent properties will be held on Tuesday, June 18, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. in the Municipal Building. He added that three (3) of the parcels on the published Tax Sale Notice were paid off today. Manager Lewis stated that the Board needs to authorize someone, preferably a Select Board member, to bid on parcels. Since he is the Delinquent Tax Collector, Manager Lewis cannot do this himself. He added that this is just a precaution as the Town does not bid on trailers and he expected the other parcels to generate some interest. Selectman Goslant volunteered for this role. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to appoint Kenneth Goslant as the Town's Tax Sale Bidder. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Selectman Goslant abstaining.**
- g. **Appointment of Grand Juror.** Chair Quinn noted that MaryJoanne "Goldie" Watson had expressed interest in the vacant Grand Juror position. Ms. Watson stated that she had been a child abuse investigator for over ten (10) years and now that she has retired she would like to give back to the community by offering her services. Manager Lewis stated that it has been his experience that except in extraordinary circumstances, this is a fairly inactive position. He added that Ms. Watson seems qualified to serve. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to appoint Ms. Watson as Grand Juror. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- h. **Joint Board Meeting: Monday, June 24, 2013.** It was noted that in the past, the Town Selectmen and Village Trustees held separate Board Retreats in the summer. Chair Quinn suggested that since there are a myriad of Town/Village Merger issues to be resolved, it might be a good idea to hold a Joint Board Retreat this year. This will be an agenda item at this meeting.
- i. **Status Reports: Various Projects**
 - 1. **Ancient Roads.** Selectman Bradley has been working on this and he felt that the Board will need to address this in the near future as the deadline for action is July 2015. There are some identified ancient roads that the Town may want to retain as trails or Class 4 roads pending final determinations. Selectman Gadbois volunteered to help locate any roads and/or trails that the Town might want to keep. Chair Quinn also is willing to help later this summer when he has more free time.
 - 2. **Economic Development Committee Meeting.** Selectman Bradley stated that the committee held its latest meeting a couple weeks ago (05/28/13). A new committee chair and vice-chair were appointed; a new mission statement was approved; there was a discussion of revising the current tax stabilization policy; etc. The committee also confirmed its regular meeting date as the last Wednesday of the month so the next meeting will be on June 26, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building.
 - 3. **Town Highway Subcommittee.** Selectman Gadbois would like the subcommittee to meet soon. Manager Lewis felt this might be difficult since he is on vacation the rest of this week and Highway Superintendent DeMasi is gone next week. Chair Quinn suggested that something could be arranged by email.
 - 4. **Recreation Fields Lighting.** Selectman Gadbois asked if there was any chance of installing additional lighting at the ball fields so that night games could be scheduled. Selectman Goslant stated that this possibility was investigated about twenty (20) years ago and the estimated cost then was about \$90,000. He agreed that this might be a good idea but the price might be prohibitive.

5. **All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Ordinance.** Chair Quinn asked if any progress has been made on the revised ordinance that was requested by the Lost Nation ATV Club. Manager Lewis stated that since the ordinance revision process probably would be lengthy given the need for site visits, property owner notification, etc., it might be useful for the Board to tentatively approve allowing one of the roads targeted for ATV trail expansion to be part of a test case. He noted that the Board does have some latitude to provide temporary approval in anticipation of an ordinance change. Chair Quinn recently spoke to Roxbury's Select Board Chair who indicated that there had been no problems since their ATV ordinance was passed last year. Selectman Goslant felt that expanding the ATV trail system into Northfield might be a boon to the local economy. Manager Lewis will have a proposal for the next meeting.
6. **Police Chief Position.** Chair Quinn stated that he had attended the last Berlin Select Board meeting to discuss the possibility of both communities saving some money by sharing a Police Chief. There was some interest indicated but there also were some concerns expressed. The Berlin Select Board will check with their Police Chief to see if he considers this feasible and desirable. Manager Lewis stated that he was contacted by a *Times Argus* reporter on this subject. He told him that as Northfield moves toward merger, it will be looking at all options to reduce expenses.
7. **Maintenance of One- and Two-House Roads.** Selectman Goslant asked if there was any interest in looking again at contracting out the winter maintenance of some of the less travelled backroads. Chair Quinn would not favor revisiting this matter unless definite cost savings can be demonstrated. Selectman Goslant believes that a fair assessment has not yet been done. Selectman Bradley also would need to see proof of benefits before proceeding. In addition, he felt that the Board should wait on this until CVRPC has provided its review of the Town's plow routes. Manager Lewis would like the supposed fiscal benefits of subcontracting road maintenance determined once and for all by the end of this summer. The Highway Subcommittee should have the initial review.

IX. MANAGER'S REPORT. Manager Lewis had a few items to add to his written report.

- a. **Vehicle Damage.** Manager Lewis noted that a NPD vehicle sustained a dent over the weekend when an Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) unit backed into it. The damage was so minor that the insurance company wasn't contacted.
- b. **Highway Foreman.** Manager Lewis reported that Town Highway Operator Ray Hudson has been appointed as the new Highway Foreman. This position had remained vacant since Tim Davis left to become Berlin's Highway Superintendent.
- c. **Combined Emergency Services Facility.** Manager Lewis stated that the meeting held on this topic at the Fire Station with NFD and NAS personnel last Thursday night (06/06/13) was very enlightening. He has invited a VOSHA inspector to assess the existing facility to determine what space issues might exist. Chair Quinn would like to review the first draft of any combined facility proposal. Manager Lewis stated that the next step would be to develop a grant application to see if any state or federal funds might be available. He is hoping to provide a feasibility study to the Select Board next month.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Non-agenda items.

- a. **Kathleen Lott: FEMA Buyout Process.** Ms. Lott asked about the status of the thirteen (13) structures damaged by Tropical Storm Irene that are targeted for demolition. Manager Lewis stated that the buyout process for three (3) of the properties has been closed. In addition, the appraisals of the other properties have been completed. Now it is a matter of completing the paperwork on the remaining ten (10) structures. Manager Lewis stated that due to the long time delay since the demolition bid proposals were submitted, this project will have to be rebid.

XI. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

These minutes are subject to approval at the next regular meeting.

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.